PREFACE.

Hinduism is the religion of the majority in India. It is so catholic, flexible and elastic as to embrace in its fold every form of worship, every system of thought, every symbol of philosophy and is so infinitely varied and modified by different modes of culture, by different habits of life, by different kinds of civilisation in the multifarious progressive stages of the evolution of humanity, as to be aptly called *"an encyclopaedia of religions".* It is not therefore possible to convey a full and comprehensive idea of it within the compass of a single volume. I have accordingly confined my research to that aspect of Hinduism as can be gleaned from the sayings of our ancient Rishis in the Upanishadic age. The profoundest occult truths into which human intellect has ever penetrated have been expounded, glorified and unified in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavadgita,* the two sacred works of Hinduism which have immensely influenced and are influencing the lives of millions of people in this country and which have been the source of my illumination and strength in every doubt and difficulty, in every trial and temptation and the uplifting consolation in the deepest and darkest sorrows which

fell to my lot in this world^ In other words,
these ancient
rhapsodies of truth have been and are to
me, in the perilous ^
journey of my humble life, like the balmy
breeze which
refreshes the drooping frame, like the
charming voice which
cheers the heavy heart, like the vernal
shower which brings
the vital sap to the withering plant, like the
silvery stream
which imparts life and strength to the
weary hart and like
the shining star which guides the
bewildered way-farer lost
in gloom. I need hardly state that the
peculiar grandeur and
the pre-eminent excellence of these two
glorified Scriptures
consists in this unquestionable fact—that
they present to'
humanity in one panoramic view the glaring
contrasts between,